

ABROAD

LUXEMBOURG

Lakes and Mountains

Agricultural surpluses seem to have become accepted as part of the American political heritage. But the European Common Market, whose principal domestic problem is the farm lobby, especially in France, is catching up fast. Here are some statistics: There is a surplus of 300,000 tons of beef in the EEC every year. It has to be frozen, which takes away much of its value and leaves it fit only for canning, in which form it must compete, generally unsuccessfully, with Argentine and Australian imports. The average yearly wine surplus is 710 million gallons. This "lake" is made into industrial alcohol for use in paint and cosmetics. Half a million tons of butter too many are produced in the Common Market annually. In the last seven years, the butter "mountain" has amounted to three and a half million tons. Some of this has been dumped in the Soviet Union, but even so, it has cost the European taxpayers about \$6 billion. Last year, 500,000 tons of apples and 45,000 tons of pears were also converted into industrial alcohol because no one would buy them at supported prices. Almost the entire Greek orange crop was destroyed for the same reason. Artificially high price levels for wheat have stimulated farmers to grow eight million tons more wheat than can be consumed. In the last few years, it has cost \$1.5 billion to pay for and store the surplus. Moreover, large-scale wheat cultivation has changed the pattern of the countryside. Age-old hedgerows and tree-lined pastures have been swept away to make it easier to use sowing and harvesting machinery.

METZ

Ruin

In a wooded area not far from this industrial center of Lorraine, near the melancholy steel town of Briey, stands a modern, 18-story block-long apartment house, almost in ruins. The last family has moved out. Obscene graffiti cover the staircase walls. The elevators no longer run. The cooperative shop that was supposed to form a community center is dark, its windows smashed. The wide corridors running the length of the building are littered with beer cans and excrement. Yet this structure was the creation, only 23 years ago, of the celebrated Franco-Swiss architect Le Corbusier, perhaps the most influential habitation planner of the twentieth century and known throughout the world for his ideas and designs. His *Cité Radieuse*, a great slab of apartments high on stilts, continues to thrive near Marseilles, and other ensembles and buildings modeled on it testify to the force of his thought if not always of the success of his insight into human nature. It was this lack of insight that was apparently the problem at Briey. The idea of a communal lodging off in the wilderness didn't work in the semi-depressed smokestack culture of a Lorraine steel town. There was never any real community, mostly groups of migrant workers, Italians or Portuguese or North Africans, for whom planning theories did not exist. And yet, ironically, there is a housing shortage in the region. Little by little the proud "Corbu" was closed, its services shut down and its fabric surrendered.

Various solutions were advanced—for a police barracks, a university annex, even a prison, but none proved acceptable.

BRUSSELS

Latinists

By the year 2000 one-sixth of the earth's population will speak a Romance language, or language of Latin root, according to a study published here by the Union Latina. Of these languages, by far the fastest growing will be French and Spanish, with calculated increases of 67.6 and 66.5 per cent respectively. Of the other Latin languages, Italian, Rumanian, and Portuguese, only Italian will not extend its domain appreciably. Of the billion Latin-language speakers in 2000, by far the greatest number will be 422 million Hispanophones, two and a half times as numerous as French speakers, who include many of the former French colonial African states. But, the study continued, Spanish will continue to lose out to English and French as an international medium of communication because Spanish speakers are too concentrated in one part of the globe and have little influence outside the Americas. One language expert, Jorge Edwards of Chile, thought that while people used to think that Latin America would end up speaking English, the tendency now is the reverse. There will be 24 million Hispanophones in the United States by the end of the century, and Spanish will impose itself there to an important extent, as well as in a multilingual European Common Market.

ROME

Nondivorce, Italian Style

Ten years ago, a tumultuous plebiscite authorized civil divorce in Italy, in the teeth of fierce opposition from the Roman Catholic Church. How has this since affected Italian family life? Curiously, hardly at all. Marriage is still far more stable in Italy than in other Western European countries. The only remarkable thing is the relative rise in the rate of separations, but the step over the threshold of divorce is still one Italians are reluctant to take. Italian couples at present divorce 12 times less often than in Sweden; 8 times less than in France; and 15 times less than in Britain. For a population of almost sixty million, divorces in Italy average a comparatively low rate of 12,000 a year.



"He's been trying to forget the Bomb for 37 years."

Folke, Punch / Rothco

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